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Canadian Food
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Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments

Nepean, Ontario
K1A 0Y9

March 2, 2001

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

Dr. John C. Prucha
Deputy Administrator
FSIS/USDA
341-E Administration Building
12th and Jefferson Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250
U.S.A.

Dear Dr. Prucha:

**Subject: Draft Final Report on the 2000 USDA Systems Equivalence Audit of the
Canadian Federal Meat Inspection Program**

This is further to your letter of October 20, 2000, which provided a copy of the final draft report for the systems equivalence audit conducted April 4 to 20, 2000, on meat inspection activities delivered by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the professionalism demonstrated by the USDA auditor, Dr. Oto Urban, who performed the audit and completed the report in a thorough and balanced manner. I am pleased to note, in particular, the acknowledgment that where findings of deviation were identified, corrective measures were implemented immediately.

When the final report is released, we intend to provide copies to CFIA meat inspection staff and to industry to ensure that they have a full appreciation of the audit process and of the issues that are of particular interest to the USDA.

With respect to information set out in the report regarding the supervision of establishments, I feel it is important to emphasize that the approach taken by the CFIA is fully equivalent to that of the USDA in achieving uniformity and consistency of program delivery and establishment compliance. CFIA program and operations staff who have functional and/or direct line responsibility visit registered establishments on an ongoing basis either within the scope of program development work, Food Safety Enhancement Program (FSEP) activities or formal regional reviews. Each of these visits provides an opportunity for supervisory staff to verify the quality of program delivery and assess the compliance status of the establishment.

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Additionally, if at any time the inspector-in-charge has concerns regarding an establishment's compliance with requirements, it is understood that they are to call the supervisor for assistance and guidance. Lastly, the CFIA is beginning to implement new electronic reporting systems for inspection, FSEP audit, and enforcement activities which will facilitate the identification and treatment of non-compliant establishments by CFIA inspectors, supervisors and enforcement staff.

The current tracking document, the Establishment Inspection Report (form CFIA 1427) summarizes inspection findings and overall establishment compliance on a monthly basis and is now primarily used by the inspector-in-charge to forward this information to area and national staff. Pending full implementation of alternative reporting tools, supervisory staff are being instructed to document their visits to establishments through form CFIA 1427 in order to demonstrate that formal supervision reviews are taking place at least on a quarterly basis.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft report. Should you have any questions on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M.F. Baker', with a stylized, cursive script.

M.F. Baker
Director
Food of Animal Origin Division